

**PARK BOARD MEETING
Foster Community Center
May 10, 2017**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Veronica Gracia-Wing, Jim McClurken, Rita O'Brien, Paulette Carter-Scott, Rick Kibbey

MEMBERS ABSENT: Clayton King, Bryan Beverly, Rosalinda Hernandez

OTHERS PRESENT: Brett Kaschinske, Parks and Recreation Director; Kellie Brown, Board Secretary; Ryon Smith; Bethany Styer; Kathleen Badgley; Matthias Bell; Pete Wood; Michael Prohaska; Brian Lum; Michael Ruddock; Benjamin Klahn; Willow Hassel; Ross Fisher; Harold Leeman; Katherine Holloway

CALLED TO ORDER: 7:05 p.m.

ADDITIONS/DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA

Kaschinske added e-mail from Kathleen Badgley under correspondence. O'Brien asked to delete Foster Park since plans are different than those presented in the packet.

Kaschinske stated he was going to update the board and advise the City has been working with the group for Foster Park.

Gracia-Wing inquired if a general update could be provided without definite plans. O'Brien agreed.

BOARD MEETING MINUTES

McClurken moved to accept the March 8, 2017 minutes as submitted; seconded by Paulette Carter-Scott. 5 yeas; 0 nays

Motion carried

NEW BUSINESS

Cooley Haze (Women's Historical Center (WHC))

Gracia-Wing added a draft sub-committee update and overview report. She pointed out the goals and outcomes section of the report. The sub-committee will be touring the house next week and will be meeting afterward.

Kibbey asked when identifying an expert in historic properties, look for someone with experience in renovating and not just an interest in historic homes.

Gracia-Wing stated Joe Vitale has been asked to be part of the sub-committee and he has experience and is a realtor.

Kaschinske added at the end of April the WHC vacated the building, which was at the end of their lease, and the separation was without issue.

Gracia-Wing would like all further information on this matter to reference this as the Cooley-Haze instead of Women's Historical Center.

Foster Park

Kaschinske referred to the draft concept and stated several meetings have been held with discussion on the plans. Jerry Smith had presented his idea to the board and the board asked him to meet with neighborhood groups involved with Foster Park.

Kibbey urged Park Board members not familiar with this park to take a tour. Foster Park is a great example of cooperation and revitalization.

Budget

Kaschinske stated he presented the budget on April 17 to Council and overall it went well. Council had concerns regarding the Groesbeck/ Lansing Entertainment & Public Facilities Authority (LEPFA) agreement that was presented earlier by Scott Keith, President and CEO of LEPFA.

Kibbey stated during the last nine year we have tried to deal with short fall and made agreements that substantially changed the nature of the department. He would like to go back and look at responsibilities of the board and department, budget, oversight and changes. For example, the Forestry Department, that is no longer under Parks. Since the loss of Forestry, we do not hear anything or receive reports on the work they are doing.

Gracia-Wing asked if he would spearhead this subject. Kibbey stated yes, Gracia-Wing stated she would also. McClurken stated he would assist under distress.

Groesbeck/LEPFA

Gracia-Wing reminded the audience of the recent changes to the agenda and statements of citizens is at the end of the meeting. However, citizens are able to speak on agenda items after board members have discussed said agenda item.

Kaschinske stated the City cannot continue on its own and needs a partner. A draft business plan was e-mailed to board members. The plan is for LEPFA to manage, provide maintenance and concessions for Groesbeck

Council requested a business plan and inquired about staff. There is currently one Teamster 243 Supervisor and two UAW workers. There are vacancies in maintenance and they would be placed in Public Service/Parks. They could work for LEPFA, but Kaschinske doubts they would make that move due to their time with current unions.

Scott Keith provided information at the March meeting on plans and budget.

McClurken inquired about the origin of the proposal. Kaschinske stated Mayor wants to reduce the golf subsidy.

McClurken clarified this started in the Mayor's office. Kaschinske stated yes as part of his budget.

McClurken stated his figures that he has and talks with the public about is \$4,000,000 for golf and why does it cost so much.

Kaschinske stated those numbers were presented by Scott Keith which has CIP projects and proposals included and golf does not cost \$4 million to operate.

McClurken stated he has a budget sheet which projects \$3,800,000 for operation.

Kaschinske stated he would send the golf budget to him.

Gracia-Wing inquired what the Park Board can and cannot do regarding this.

Kaschinske stated the budget was presented by Administration, the Park Board has input on CIP projects. Council now has this and comments may be made to Council

McClurken inquired if Park Board could hold a special meeting with Council.

Kaschinske reviewed budget.

O'Brien inquired what the difference between subsidies and CIP is.

Kaschinske stated CIP are projects and subsidies are not.

Gracia-Wing responded to McClurken's request by stating this budget was presented to the board after the Council hearing.

O'Brien stated the board's votes on CIP projects do not match the actual CIP list. In the minutes the ratings provided do not match the final CIP list.

Kaschinske reviewed the rankings from the minutes and CIP final list. What the board voted for is in the CIP list, some have different amounts.

Gracia-Wing stated the board would have had a difference decision on the Groesbeck patio if the LEPFA proposal would have been presented first.

Kibbey inquired if LEPFA is doing entertainment or maintenance.

Kaschinske stated LEPFA would do 100% maintenance and operation.

Kibbey stated we have been through this before to privatize and also about a new entrance to the course.

Gracia-Wing expressed this board does not support millage money for patio or subsidy if LEPFA is running Groesbeck and they should appeal to Council.

Kibbey stated this should be put out to bid and see how LEPFA compares to other offers.

Kaschinske stated bids were put out in 2011 to privatize and there was still a subsidy involved.

McClurken stated he did not hear of this plan at a Park Board meeting, but outside of the board. LEPFA ran the Farmers Market until it was no longer. The public is not being consulted and Council does need to hear about from them.

Kaschinske stated there was discussion prior to March but it was not ready to be brought to the board. The course is two holes down and staff has been through the pain. The subsidy has been discussed, as well as concessions and operations. This is not an easy decision for the department.

McClurken stated discussion did not take place on LEPFA doing this and it is an issue where decisions need to be made.

Kathleen Badgely stated she has been monitoring the minutes and in the Master Plan the interest in golf is 14 out of 15 whereas nature was in the top 4 or 5 interests. Also, in the proposed budget is a new road included.

Kaschinske stated there is no line item for one and it would be an entrance to the golf course.

Badgley asked if it is in the proposal to change Ormond Park.

Kaschinske stated there is no line item.

Badgley stated this has come up several times and it has been for safety reasons. They have asked for stop signs and those have not even been put into place. An entrance from Wood Street would be better. After sixteen years it begs to question if reduction of traffic is the real purpose.

The budget for the tent does not include accessibility, tables, chairs, staff, PA system, lights, electricity or a prep kitchen. The location is not desirable. Badgley provided packets to each board member with her study and information.

Kaschinske stated this was in the 5-Year Plan.

Badgley stated it is not in the Executive Summary or Master Plan and the Groesbeck entrance is not match the Master Plan.

Peter Wood stated he lives on Green Street and he referred to the objectives in the Master Plan. Keeping Ormond would keep with the objective. There has been a change to the neighborhood demographics with younger kids who utilize the park and gang activity is down.

Ryon Smith stated he remembers when there were four golf courses and looking at the condition of the other three courses. One of the issues is golf is a middle class activity and a lot of middle class income residents have moved out of the city. Groesbeck also used to offer youth leagues and activities. His concern is this is being projected to fail and there are developers who would want to build on the property. He hopes this board, Council and Mayor will openly discuss this and look at options.

Beth Styer lives on Green Street. She said she has been there since 2013 and one attraction was the character of the street and the dead end into the park. Last year the central play structure was removed. She stated she has heard trees would need to be removed to put the road in.

In the 5-year plan public input was for trails, playgrounds, nature and not roads. Also, the proposed site could not be ADA accessible.

Gracia-Wing brought the conversation back to the board for input on Groesbeck/LEPFA.

McClurken stated a written response should be sent to Council. The board was not consulted about changing the relationship with LEPFA.

O'Brien made a motion to remove the \$75,000 from the Parks millage budget if LEPFA takes over management.

Seconded by Carter-Scott.

Kibbey stated this has come before the board regarding maintenance and hospitality at Groesbeck and he is not aware how LEPFA became the only option.

McClurken will initiate a letter to Council with the boards concerns and send it to Gracia-Wing for distribution and signatures.

Peter Wood clarified his understanding is this was not a Park Board decision.

Gracia-Wing understands Ormond is not part of the Groesbeck/LEPFA agreement and the road at Ormond is not on the table.

Kaschinske stated Ormond is not a line item at this time.

Wood stated it is in the action plan.

Gracia-Wing is there are concerns with the Groesbeck/LEPFA agreement; please contact your Council representative. If there are concerns about Ormond, the group has taken the first step by coming to the board, but tonight it is not an agenda item.

Badgley stated if a road is to be put in, there will need to be a public hearing.

Kaschinske stated he does not believe that is how the ordinance reads, and recommends she contact the City Attorney for clarification.

Gracia-Wing asked Kaschinske if the Ormond entrance will be brought to the board.

Kibbey asked for commitment from the Director that this matter will be brought to the board and recommended to the neighbors to contact Councilmember Washington.

Kaschinske stated he cannot guarantee this board will have a chance to vote or a public hearing would take place on an entrance to Groesbeck through Ormond Park.

Moore's Park Pavilion

Kaschinske stated building maintenance inspected the pavilion and the supports under the pavilion were reviewed by the city engineer. After inspection the pavilion was deemed unsafe, shut down and boarded up.

Reservations are being changed to other pavilions. Further inspections are being done. This decision was done as a preventative safety measure.

O'Brien inquired if the neighborhood knows.

Kaschinske stated he spoke with Natalie Molnar from Moore's Park Neighborhood Organization (MPNO).

Gracia-Wing stated Natalie is no longer the contact. She also inquired if there is signage and is the pavilion going to be demolished.

Kaschinske stated an analysis is being done.

Gracia-Wing stated there needs to be a better process for preventative maintenance. How does a building go from being functional one day to condemn the next.

O'Brien asked about a time line.

Kaschinske stated structural engineers are looking at the pavilion. A selection has not been made, and no price has been determined.

McClurken stated board members are engaging with the public and could regular updates be provided.

Kaschinske stated yes, but caution would take place on what is shared as situations can change quickly.

Gracia-Wing inquired if the plywood could be painted.

Kaschinske stated yes.

MPNO stated is has not been mentioned to the public. They would like estimates as soon as possible for repair and historic restoration.

Stated as an engineer the inventory and repair of city parks property is bad at best. The retention wall is in worst shape and poses more of a danger. MPNO inquired if engineers have looked at the pavilion and could a report be made public.

Kaschinske stated no report has been done and the scope has not been put together. When done, results will be brought to the board.

Justin, MPNO, stated he has only lived in the neighborhood for one year and the park has had issues with no bathrooms, porta unit has been removed, the river trail is in terrible condition and not the pavilion. The park is utilized and he would urge that this issue be addressed.

Kaschinske stated there have been meetings with MPNO and discussion took place on refurbishing the tennis courts for basketball, there is a grant for soccer nets, a grant has been presented to the MNDR Trust Fund for a canoe/kayak launch, the river trail has new deck boards and the Ingham County grants is for the repair of the river trail bank and this is the only operational Bintz pool in the country. MPNO has a key to the restroom for their events and anyone who rents the pavilion receives a key to the restroom for use during their rental time. There have been issues with the porta unit for the past two years, and the damage this time resulted in the department having to pay American Rental for an entire unit.

Katrina, MPNO, stated part of the reason for crime is blight and with the pavilion boarded up this appears as a blight area.

Kaschinske stated he would work with MPNO on beautification of the boards on the pavilion.

MPNO stated since the porta unit has been removed, individuals are using the bushes.

Badgley commented there are parks that need and want maintenance and why spend money on a park like Ormond where no one wants what is being proposed done.

Gracia-Wing requested the board be updated on the bids for Moores Park.

UPDATES

River Trail Grants

Kaschinske stated to date we have received \$4.5 million dollars from the county wide millage.

CIP Final

Was covered in earlier discussion

Bancroft Park

Kaschinske stated the playground is not being moved. He sent this information to Friends of Bancroft Park and Eastside Neighborhood Organization and did not hear back from either group. Also, the issue with the standing water has been located and will be corrected.

Deer Social Sustainability

Kaschinske stated the Mayor is not looking to do a study at this time and there is no line item in the budget for a survey.

CORRESPONDENCE

Board members were provided with an e-mail from Trevor Rheaume regarding uses for Washington Park and from Kathleen Badgely regarding an entrance to Groesbeck through Ormond Park.

Meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted: Kellie Brown, Park Board Secretary
Approved June 14, 2017